NOW IS THE TIME TO BUY: GEORGE HENRY WHITE & THE TOWN OF WHITESBORO

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GEORGE HENRY WHITE

Introduction

George H. White, an African-American congressional representative from North Carolina from 1896 to 1901, was the last African-American to hold a seat in the United State Congress in the 19th century after Reconstruction. He left the Congress and the state at the turn of the century, run off by the culmination of a twenty-year effort on the part of Southern whites to achieve legal segregation and legal disenfranchisement of African-Americans in the region. In his term in Congress, George White protested the illegal repression and the legal changes that increasingly denied African-Americans civic equality, but to no avail. Disenfranchisement of African-American voters cost White his congressional seat in 1900.

Due to the complexities of racial oppression and resistance, of urban migration and industrial change, the early twentieth-century was the pivotal point in shaping modern African-American culture. Like many African-Americans during and after the 1890s, White shifted his agenda for helping African-Americans from the political to the economic arena. However, unlike other African-American southern leaders, such as Booker T. Washington in Alabama, or the emergent African-American business leaders of Durham, White did not urge African-

Americans to improve their lot economically in the South- - to "cast down their bucket where they were." [1]

On the contrary, White believed that African-Americans who stayed in the South faced a future only of more "degradation and subjection." [2] African-Americans in North Carolina and elsewhere, he argued, should leave the South that had scorned and rebuked them. He announced and predicted in the fall of 1900 that "there will be an exodus" [3] of fifty thousand Negroes from North Carolina because of a North Carolina's constitutional amendment that disenfranchised African-Americans from the political system.

He stated his personal determination that "this immigration should be systematic." [4] To make the exodus work "a home should be provided before they leave their homes in the South." [5] Very little is known of the project of George H. White and other scorned southern African-American leaders to provide a home in the North for what they hoped would be a mass turn-of-the-century exodus from the South. That effort to provide a northern home for expatriate African-Americans is the focus of this project.

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[1] Washington Star (Washington), 04 January 1899.
[2] New York Times (New York), 26 August 1900.
[3] New York Times (New York), 26 August 1900.
[4] Atlanta Journal (Atlanta), 04 September 1900.
[5] Atlanta Journal (Atlanta), 04 September 1900.

The George H. White Land & Improvement Company was founded in Philadelphia and Cape May, New Jersey, to build an independent African-American community in the North where African-Americans could gain control of their lives and identities in a racist culture. In 1901, White and his investors purchased 2,000 acres of wooded land that became Whitesboro. Located in the Middle Township of Cape May County, it became the first African-American town in New Jersey.

This project will look at how George Henry White and his investors used the tools of land development and home ownership to create an early twentieth-century "empowerment zone" [6] for the African-Americans who faced enormous racial hostility in the South. In order to fully understand the processes that the George Henry White Realty & Development Company used to create the town of Whitesboro, this project will explore the following questions.

First, what caused the George Henry White Land & Improvement Company to purchase land in an all-White town? In order to answer this question, the records of Equitable Industrial Association (EIA) [7] will provide insight into the political, social, and economic conditions of African-Americans living in Cape May before White or the Town of Whitesboro. In

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[6] An "empowerment zone" is a particular area in a city or town designed for economic and social upliftment.

addition, this project will use supporting documents from the Cape May Herald Newspaper. For example, in 1901, the Cape May Herald's editor Marcus Scull, promoted a campaign to remove African-Americans from Cape May City.

Second, what effects did the investors have on the George Henry White Land & Improvement's decision to build in Cape May? What was the business arrangement between Robert Hands and George H. White and his primary investor group? Robert Hands owned the land that eventually would be Whitesboro. This project will use the Deed of Records, and the Mortgage records. According to the Deed of Records, at one time the 2,000 acres they purchased belonged to Aaron Leaming, Jr. and Thomas Leaming, Jr., who were the largest slave owners in Cape May County's history. The George Henry White Land & Improvement Company developed Whitesboro, Wildwood Height, and Wildwood Junction Heights New Jersey; the deeds for these developments will be helpful in this project quest.

Third, why did the George Henry White Land & Improvement Company refuse to sell shares in its planned Negro community to African-Americans living in Cape May, New Jersey? According to the agreement between EIA, the George Henry White Land & Improvement Company was going sell shares ("Planned Negro

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[7] The EIA was an association in Cape May that bought local African-American business omand community leaders together.

Community") to local African-Americans. However, the Whitesboro Historian Foundation stated that in 1901, George H. White sold shares for the "planned Negro community" to African-Americans from North Carolina and Virginia. Lastly, how did the George Henry White Land & Improvement Company persuade African-Americans to settle in Cape May, New Jersey? This project will examine the advertisements and slogans that the George H. White Realty and Development Company used.

During this process, White wrote to several people asking them to buy a lot in Whitesboro and the surrounding area. This project will examine the 1900, 1910, and 1920 United States Census records and the mortgage records to understand the people who were buying and living in Whitesboro, Wildwood Height s, and Wildwood Junction Heights. I will use the records from the local government to gain a better picture on the actual sentiment of county leadership toward White developing an all African-American town in Cape May County.

George Henry White answered the call of the 1890s because African-Americans were suffering from the restructuring of the new South. During the 1890s, North Carolina was coping with harsh economic problems. The News & Observer stated that the "state, like the rest of America, experienced a devastating

depression in the 1890s." [8] Moreover, the south needed to find away to disenfranchise African-Americans from the American political, economic, and social fibers. Beginning in 1898, Jim Crow laws restricted the rights and lives of Americans living in North Carolina.

As a social reformer, George Henry White viewed opportunity in supporting Fusion candidates. According to Joseph Neff, "Blacks joined with Republicans and Populists to support so-called Fusion candidates, who swept state elections in 1896." [9] However, this political change did not derail the agenda of white Democrats. "White supremacist Democrats counterattacked with a vicious race-based campaign in 1898, using fraud and violence to strip blacks of power and their rights." [10] One particular motivator for White were the violent attacks on African-Americans living in Wilmington, North Carolina. During the Wilmington Riots, according to Neff, "white mobs in Wilmington shot and killed blacks in the street." [11] Additionally, the Democratic political machine assisted in stripping African-Americans of their rights in North Carolina. The New & Observer stated that

> Bolstered by the U. S. Supreme Court's 1898 Plessy vs. Ferguson decision, which effectively legalized the complete separation of the races, the Democrats imposed laws locking

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[8] News & Observer (Raleigh/Durham), 12 December 1999.
[9] The News & Observer (Raleigh/Durham), 12 December 1999.
[10] The News & Observer (Raleigh/Durham), 12 December 1999.
[11] The News & Observer (Raleigh/Durham), 12 December 1999.

blacks into a position of economic and social inferiority.[12]

Meanwhile, the political, social, economic policies of North Carolina promoted "Jim Crow laws." According to Neff, "Jim Crow laws separated the races in housing, jobs, schools, sports, recreation, prisons, asylums, orphanages, cemeteries, hospitals, and trains." [13] White envisioned for African-Americans living in North Carolina, a place where the laws were not based in a nation of separate but equal accommodations for African-Americans.

George Henry White

George Henry White was the last African-American to serve in United States House of Representatives in the 19th century. However, he was also the first African-American in the 20th to serve in the Congress. During this period, the Reconstruction Era had ended, but African-Americans were still being elected to serve in public office. The state of North Carolina represented the exception. In order to get a clear perception of the circumstances under which he was elected, it will be necessary to understand White's past.

White was born in Blanden or Columbus County, North Carolina. He was born into the slave system. His education

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[12] The News & Observer (Raleigh/Durham), 12 Decembe 1999.

began with primary and secondary schools in North Carolina, and eventually he moved to Washington, D.C. where he attended Howard University. William L. Schunck tells us that, after graduation from Howard University in 1877, White was principal of the colored grade school, the Presbyterian parochial school, and the State Normal School in New Bern. He also received a license to practice law in North Carolina in 1879, under the training of Judge William S. Clarke.

In 1881, his career as an educator and lawyer was interrupted by service to the people of North Carolina. First, he ran two successful campaigns for North Carolina State Representatives in 1882 and the Senate in 1885. Nonetheless, in 1886, he won his first four-year term as district solicitor in a three-way race.

In 1884, White was one of two blacks elected to the North Carolina State Senate. Between 1885 and 1888, White moved to Tarboro, Edgecombe County, North Carolina. In 1886, he was chosen Solicitor and Prosecuting Attorney of the Second Judicial District. In 1896, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. White served as an outstanding lawyer in the state. He was a large property holder. He was a delegate to the 11th and 12th Republican National Convententions (1896, 1900),

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[13] The News & Observer (Raleigh/Durham), 12 December 1999.

and the titular black leader of the strongest organization of Negroes in the state, the Negro State Council.[14]

White's leadership prevailed in 1898 and 1901 when he was elected to the Congress. In White's second term of 56th Congress, he became a more progressive congressional representative. During the first session of 56th Congress, White focused on producing socially conscious bills that would address the concerns of African-Americans. These bills if passed, would have brought empowerment to the disenfranchised African-Americans.

White knew that African-Americans faced deprivation of their constitutional rights, disfranchisement, and murder. He was an outspoken voice for the former enslaved people of America. Whenever he had the opportunity to address the issues of African-Americans in a public forum, he took advantage of the situation. One place where he knew he could raise the awareness level toward the inhumane condition of African-Americans was on the United States House of Representative's floor. There, White stated the following:

> It is easy for these men to taunt us with our inferiority, at the same time not mentioning the cause of this inferiority. It is rather hard to be the accused of shiftlessness and idleness when the accuser of his own motion closed the avenues for labor and industrial pursuits to us. It is hardly fair to accuse us of ignorance when it

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[14] Reid, George W. "The Post-Congressional Career of George H. White," Journal of Negro History 61 (October 1976) : 362.

> was made a crime under the former order of things to read the word of God.
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> While I offer no extenuation for any immorality that may exist among my people, it comes with rather poor grace for those who forced it up on us for two hundred and fifty years to taunt us with that shortcoming. (Congressional Record, 1898-1899)

This speech expressed White's feelings that a nation should be just to all of her citizens, protecting them alike in all their rights and in every aspect of their lives. However, America was not protecting its entire citizen, especially at end of 19th century. White's remarks in the Congress address the fact that American failed in this area, and America social policy went against a moral standard. Moreover, he analyzed the nation's immorality against African-Americans for two hundred years. He also had a sense of caring for the wives and children of the post Civil War soldiers during their absence from home, and compared this loyalty with the accusations made then against African-American men for "outraging" white females.

In mid 1899, White gave a commencement address to the Avery Training School. In that address, White previewed a philosophy of self-determination that became the basis of his founding of the Town of Whitesboro. He stated that, "before the war all labor in the South, both skilled and otherwise, was done by the

blacks." [15] He was balancing the debates between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Dubois over industrial and intellectual opportunities. According to White,

> There should be no conflict between industrial and intellectual schools. Not all of us can be lawyers, ministers, or teachers. We have done well along these lines, but I want to call attention to the fact that the great commercial markets are comparatively unexplored by black men. We must prepare ourselves to fill all those avenues that are open to other men. [16]

The remarks to these young men revealed White's feelings toward the opportunities that awaited African-Americans at the turn of the twentieth-century.

A contributing factor to White's industrious ability might be his origin in Columbus County North Carolina. According to Walter Weare, "located in the southeastern North Carolina, Columbus County was the home of a small Negro population of decidedly mixed ancestry." [17] Weare explained further about a special bond this community possesses. Weare stated that, "the settlement felt a sense of community in a special ethnic and chromatic sense that set is apart from its surrounding racial matrix, white, black, and Indian." [18].

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[15] Dispatch (Pittsburg), 20 June 1899.
[16] Dispatch (Pittsburg), 20 June 1899.
[17] Walter B. Weare, Black Business in the New South: A Social History of the North Caroline Mutual Life Insurance Company (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 56.
[18] Walter B. Weare, Black Business in the New South: A Social History of the North Caroline Mutual Life Insurance Company (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 56.

The racial composition developed a strong racial identity for those African-Americans living in Columbus County. Weare argued that, "it possessed a community tradition based not only on ethnic characteristics, but on its heritage of freedom, land ownership, religious legends, and a maze of kinship ties formed from generations of marriage inside the community often between first cousins." [19] Furthermore, Weare wrote that, the mixed African-Americans did try to isolate themselves from the outside world.

White was not without his critics during and after his terms in the Congress. Some of his critics described him as the most venomous of political figures in North Carolina during his period. Samuel Denny Smith was one of the most critical and appeared to be biased in his opinions of White. He characterized White as a person of flair for the dramatic, who gladly seized and used to the utmost his role as spokesperson for nine million African-Americans.

Smith portrayed White as a bitter, uncompromising assailant of everything that could be distorted in racial discrimination. According to Smith, "no matter what the topic under discussion

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[19] Walter B. Weare, Black Business in the New South: A Social History of the North Caroline Mutual Life Insurance Company (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 56.

might be, White like Cato of Rome could always bring it around to a discussion on black Americans rights." [20]

White's critics in the Democratic Party determined that White he would ride the race issue to personal party victory. Furnifold Simmons, a conservative democrat, believed that White used the race to gain victory in public office. In an address at the opening of the North Carolina State Convention, Simmons uses these words in discussing White. He stated that,

> The most influential man in the Republican party, the recognized leader of its 120,000 Negro voters; that bright particular star in the Republican firmament, inviting the race issue and insolently declaring that the Negro of North Carolina did not hold as many offices as they were entitled to hold. (Simmions 1899).

In addition, Josephus Daniel's book echoed the same sentiments. Daniel claimed that White was bitter and vicious in his speeches. (1941). Moreover, historians of Edgecombe County, North Carolina were major critics of White. They contended that White greatest weakness was his desire for social equality, which eventually led to his rejection among white North Carolinians and even among African-Americans. (1929).

In spite of the disparaging remarks about White, there seemed to be little doubt in the minds of most critics as to his qualifications. Smith, the most analytical critic of White's

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[20] Samuel Denny Smith, The Nergo in Congress, 1870 to 1901 (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1940, 1966), 125-129.

personality, acknowledged that his long experience as a solicitor had made him a fluent speaker and his speeches were easily readable. According to William Marby, even a critic admitted that White's record in Congress, though not outstanding seems to have been no discredit to the state. (1940). White's tireless efforts to fight against the inhumane treatment of African-Americans, furthermore, allowed him to bring national exposure to the practice of lynching.

CONDITION OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS

The condition of African-Americans at the turn-of-the-century was in an upswing. The reason for this upward mobilization was due to the fact that African-Americans knew that they were a vibrant part in making America. According to the late historian Benjamin Quarles, "the most popular solution hit upon by the Negro sharecropper was migration." [21] The migration north and westward would be the essential tool used to persuade African-Americans to leave the southern states. However, the great African-American migration was from southern states to southern states. Quarles stated that, much of this movement by colored families was from one part of the south to another—from country to town, from poorer to richer lands, and

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[21] Benjamin Quarles, The Nergo in the Making of America, (New York, Touchstone Book, 1964, 1969, 1987), 184.

from the older states to the newer ones." [22] Although the migration for African-Americans was confined to the South, but it did not stop African-Americans relocating to the West or the North.

WHITE'S CALL TO GO NORTH

In the fall of 1900, White pledged to relocate 50,000 African-Americans from the State of North Carolina. He made this announcement in Asheville, North Carolina. White stated that he was departing from the North Carolina for New York because of the internal political tension within his own party. According to Atlanta Journal, nothing could please North Carolina white community better. No announcement could give such universal favor. According to Atlanta Journal of 1900, "White has long since been repudiated by many Populists and Republicans and there are many of his own race who will shed no tears…when he boards the train to take up his permanent residence in the east." [23]

According to White, the state of North Carolina became a major personal and political liability for himself and for African-Americans. The political machine that he rode into the Congress was now rejecting him and his people. White felt that opportunity for him and the African-American people was in New

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[22] Benjamin Quarles, The Nergo in the Making of America, (New York, Touchstone Book, 1964, 1969, 1987), 184.
[23] Atlanta Journal (Atlanta), 04 September 1900.

York. Therefore, White stated that, "I am going to New York to live. I cannot live in North Carolina and be a man, and be treated like a man…I feel I will be given a cordial welcome there." [24]

In 1900, White explained his plan to relocate 50,000 African-Americans to the West and North. He said,

> My plan is to advise and encourage the immigration of the Negroes of North Carolina to the west and north, but especially to the west. I do not want to see them colonized anywhere, for that would result in a repetition of what has taken place in North Carolina and the South generally. I think they should lose themselves among the people of the country. A few families should settle here and a few there. Then their children will be better educated. But the bulk of the colored people must of necessity remain in the south, and I think this plan of immigration will not only benefit those who leave the south but those who remain there as well. [25]

White argued a strong case for the relocation of African-Americans. He further went on to tell where the 50,000 African-Americans should migrate. According to White,

> Our people are agricultural, and I think the vast west is the place for them. In the east and north they can only be domestic servants, but if they wasn't to plant themselves as a part of the country they should go on a farm and own their own homes. That is what the ambitious man should do, but if he wants to be a servant and a porter, the hotel is perhaps the best place for him. I believe that a third or a half of the colored population of North Carolina will leave the state eventually. It will take some time. [26]

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[24] Atlanta Journal (Atlanta), 04 September 1900

WHY CAPE MAY?

In 1900, the total African-American population in Cape May was sixty-five people. According to 11th United States Census, the gender breakdown was relatively equal. The census shows that males were 51% of the population, while the females made up 49%. The work-force was not grand. According to the Census records, 20% of the population worked as servants. Moreover, eight percent worked as laborers. In addition, 6% of African-Americans living in Cape May were farmers. Additionally, the nine percent of the African-American population was renters; moreover, the home ownership rate were at six percent at 1900. [27] Therefore, Cape May was the place for White to implement his plan.

In 1901, the opportunity that awaited the George Henry White Land & Improvement at the turn of twentieth-century laid the foundation for the local African-American community of Cape May. Through, Cape May was not an economically robust community, it did have a growing African-American middle class. For example, at the beginning of the century, the local African-American leadership in Cape May was discussing ways to build an African-American town. According to the Whitesboro Historian

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[25] Atlanta Journal (Atlanta), 04 September 1900
[26] Atlanta Journal (Atlanta), 04 September 1900
[27] United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 11th Census of the United States: 1900 Population.

Foundation (WHF)[28], local African-American leaders wanted to build a town because of the "growing pattern of discrimination in Cape May City."[29]

Local African-American leaders such as Joseph G. Vance, William L. Selvy and James W. Fishburn were the principals who suggested to George H. White to build in Cape May. Fishburn, Selvy, and Vance were very successful in their own business enterprises. Fishburn was a well-respected pastor of Cape May's African Methodist Episcopal Church. Selvy was hotel porter. Vance was a very successful storeowner. These men developed the vision for an African-American township in Cape May, but White was given the credit and the name.

In Cape May, the African-American community was indeed under assault by local white leaders. The WHF stated that:

> R. J. Cresswell, City Councilman, refused to allow any blacks on a city—sponsored trip to Wilmington in June 1901 to watch the launching of the City of Cape May, a ferryboat. A few months later, the city administration excluded African-American students from the new city high school. The "Apartment for the colored annex," the county superintendent of the schools explains, had not been completed. Black student had to attend the dilapidated Franklin Street School until the construction of the segregated wing of Cape May City High School.[30]

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[28] The Whitesboro Historian Foundation is an organization dedicated to preserving the history of Whitesboro for future generations.

[29] The Whitesboro Historian Foundation, The History of Whitesboro (Whitesboro: Whitesboro Historian Foundation, 1998).

[30] The Whitesboro Historian Foundation, The History of Whitesboro (Whitesboro: Whitesboro Historian Foundation, 1998).

These activities presented an opportunity for George H. White, because of the racial tensions facing the African-American people in Cape May were similar to those existing problems in White's home state of North Carolina.

Cape May African-Americans presented White with an opportunity to attract African-Americans from North Carolina and other southern states to a new place where they could reclaim their lives. The local African-Americans of Cape May were under attack by the local newspaper the Cape May Herald. Its outspoken editor believed that African-Americans needed to remove from Cape May. The WHF tells us that, "in 1901 the Cape May herald campaigned to remove African-American residents from Cape May City." [31] The reasons for the attacks on Cape May African-American community by Marcus Scull were economic and political. In addition, the editor had investment property throughout Cape May African-American community. According to WHF, Scull "owned property along an African-American section of Lafayette Street." Scull stood to benefit economically from the negative articles in his newspaper against African-Americans.

According to the WHF, "the Herald insisted that Cape May County could never return to the glories of pre-Civil War days until the community rid itself of its African-American

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[31] The Whitesboro Historian Foundation, The History of Whitesboro (Whitesboro: Whitesboro Historian Foundation, 1998).

population." [32] The inference here is that the Northern state wanted to implement laws that would be similar to those of southern states. One of the most important articles that Scull published appeared on the front page of his newspaper. It was a letter from a reader who had plans to redevelop Lafayette Street. WHF stated that,

> Scull published a letter on the front page of his newspaper from a reader who wanted to make Lafayette Street "an attractive avenue for settlement by white families and free from mixture with the colored population which now chiefly occupy the avenue for some distance north of Franklin Street with gas works and all things else objectionable removed them farther back toward the creek or to another location." [33]

It is clear that the African-American population in Cape May was living in prime real estate. Moreover, the interest that Scull had was personal. They created a hostile environment for those African-American residents. Cape May conflicts opened the door for George H. White and his investors to purchase land in Cape May. Cape May motivated White to create the George Henry White Land & Improvement Company.

Section II

WHITE'S VISION TO BUILD

White's vision was to build a Promised Land for African-Americans. It would be a demanding task to complete.

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[32] The Whitesboro Historian Foundation, The History of Whitesboro (Whitesboro: Whitesboro Historian Foundation, 1998).

Furthermore, White saw the 20th century as a century in which African-American could take progressive actions toward self-determination. According the New York Press, White stated that "the Negro is on the threshold of the twentieth century and he is to be reckoned with." [34]

In addition, African-Americans were not the same people they were before the Civil War. White pointed out that, "since that time illiteracy among his race had decreased 45 per cent." [35] White argued that, "the Colored man…who had done the country's work for two and a half centuries would not always remain poor." [36] He believed that there was plenty of room for African-Americans to grow and develop a respectable future for themselves.

In 1901, White translated his broad vision into small concrete reality. He bought 2000 acres in a remote area of southeastern New Jersey. The town would become the first African-American town in New Jersey. White's primary focus was to establish a place that African-Americans could call their own. The land would be a place in which African-Americans would create a sense of worth and belonging.

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[33] The Whitesboro Historian Foundation, The History of Whitesboro (Whitesboro: Whitesboro Historian Foundation, 1998).
[34] New York Press (New York), 30 January 1901.
[35] New York Press (New York), 30 January 1901.
[36] New York Press (New York), 30 January 1901.

The George Henry White Land & Improvement's Company based in Philadelphia would be the instrument that would shape the presence of African-Americans in Cape May. In 1902, the publication Who's Who in Colored Philadelphia tells us that "White bought a tract of 2000 acres of fertile land in Cape May County, New Jersey. White divided that land into two parts: 1000 acres of lots and 1000 acres of small farms." [37]

White's company and investor group understood that home ownership was an important basis of political, economic and social equality in America. However, it would not be easy road to travel. The racial discrimination in housing throughout the some northern states and in the South made it hard for African-Americans to become homeowners. According to John Hope Franklin and Isidore Starr:

> Food, clothing and shelter are prime necessities, and a good job generally means a good home, good food, and fine clothing. However, for the Negro this has not usually been so. Even if he earns a high salary, he finds it difficult to move into decent neighborhoods.[38]

The statement by Franklin and Starr was a depiction of the philosophy of the time period, it demonstrates the obstacle that presented itself to White and his company.

According to the Census Record of 1900, there was a limited number of African-Americans living in Cape May County.

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[37] C. White, Who's Who Colored Philadephia (Philadelphia: Who's 1902) 89.

Moreover, they worked different service industry jobs. The census indicated that most of the African-Americans living in Cape May were laborers and house servants. White did not offer any of the stock options to local African-Americans living in Cape May. White focused on the re-empowerment of African-American landowners from North Carolina, such as those who survived the Wilmington Riot of 1898. The term "re-empowerment" comes from the fact that before the Wilmington Riot, there was a productive economic, political, and social African-American community in Wilmington.

THE NEW YORK MODEL

One company that served as a model was the Afro-American Realty Company in Harlem, New York. It was comprised of influential African-Americans within New York City. As the George Henry White Land & Improvement stated, the Afro-American Realty Company was fighting against the racial injustice and inequality that African-American were facing when it came to real estate. According to the New York Times of 1904,

> Like most undertakings, this is the outgrowth of "race prejudice". The Afro American Realty Company, which has been formed to depress real estate values in order to bring desirable apartment houses into the market as homes for Negroes.[39]

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[38] John Hope Franklin and Isidore Starr editors, The Nergo in 20th Century America (New York: Vintage Books, 1967) 441.
[39] New York Times (New York), 21 July 1904.

Instead, White's company would focus on making African-Americans landowners, instead of renters. However, the census records of 1900, 1910, and 1920 completely reveal the effects of his effort. According to the 11th, 12th, and 13th censuses, home ownership for African-American living Cape May went from six in 1900, to seventeen in 1910, and finally in 1920 there were fifty-six African-American homeowners living in Cape May. [40] The Whitesboro community had a majority of renters. Nonetheless, the company had a strong commitment toward developing a place, according to White, where African-Americans from the south could call their "Promise Land." (1901). However, the whites living in Cape May objected to African-American living in their community.

White's business strategy was similar to those of the Afro-American Realty Company. The Afro-American Company wanted to buy land in a relatively inexpensive area, then redevelop the land, and finally, make the land appealing to upwardly mobile African-Americans. The New York Times of 1904 stated that, "the effect will be to change the character of such neighborhoods very quickly and completely." [41]

When it came to funding, the Afro-American Realty Company had a different solution. They knew it would be hard to secure

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[40] United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census
[41] New York Times (New York), 21 July 1904.

the necessary finances. The African-American community in Harlem and Cape May were not yet established as a desirable investment by local financial institutions. According to the New York Times, "Mortgage and building loans would be hard to get in connection with such undertakings…proposes for the reason that security would be regarded with suspicion". [42]

WHITE'S INVESTORS

In 1900, White called a meeting with some of his Washington D.C. friends, to discuss the idea to buy land in Cape May. As result of this meeting, they (Mary White, Harriet Gibbs, Samuel H. Vick, Wiley H. Bates, Jascon Garrett, William H. Hunt, and Harvey Green) formed the George H. White Land and Development Company (George H White Realty & Development Company). They elected Samuel H. Vick as president and White as secretary and treasure. Jones stated that, "no time was spared in surveying small farms, and laying out what is now Whitesboro, NJ…Whitesboro started with one old house and three small families." (Jones, 1981). Alice Jones of Whitesboro, states that White expressed he "would have an opportunity to secure a sufficient acreage of land where [White] could layout a town-site and in addition have sufficient land where his Negro countrymen could build up a town and farm to suit themselves." (1981).

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[42] New York Times (New York), 21 July 1904.

According Daniel Spaulding, the son of Henry W. Spaulding White's project manager,

> Before Dr. Martin Luther King was born, George H. White also had a dream that some day, some place in the North he would find, and come in possession of a desirable location of land. (Spaulding, 1981).

It would be a place desired by Henry W. Spaulding, "north of the Mason-Dixon Line." (Spaulding, 1981) Moreover, it would be the place where African-Americans could "build for themselves homes, and live in a peaceful community under their own vine and fig tree." (Spaulding, 1981). Furthermore, White stated that "after due course of time, found that the tract of land in question could be purchased for $14,000." The road for White was to pool his resources together to secure the land deal. According the land deeds, Robert E. Hand financed a percentage of the sale. He financed $5,000, therefore leaving $9,000 for White's company to finance. At this point, the George H. White Land & Development Company was created.

According to Mrs. Daniel W. Spaulding (wife of the son of the Henry W. Spaulding), her late husband "Dan" desired Whitesboro as a wooded area with a lot of potential. She did not know exactly why White selected the 2000 acres. However, she knew that her husband was proud that he grew up in Whitesboro. According to Mrs. Daniel W. Spaulding,

they would visit the family home yearly. Moreover, Daniel Spaulding stated that:

> George H. White made weekly visits to [Whitesboro] on weekends. Wildwood Junction was [White] first stop. White was on the train. It would stop by the second house built in Whitesboro, built and owned by Henry W. Spaulding, his [project manager]. (Spaulding, 1981).

As Spaulding indicated, White was extremely proud of Whitesboro and its connecting interests.

The George Henry White Land & Improvement Company expected the highest degree of professionalism for its employees and its buyers. In a letter to Askew, White wrote that he needed to move quietly to resolve General Askew's problem, who was one early homeowner. He wrote that,

> I have not hesitated to put down my own business to look after the gathering of material, the employment of men, and supervision of the construction of this building for your while you had an opportunity to quietly pursue your own work. (White, 1903).

It was clear by the statement above that the company did not plan to delay the construction of these homes. Moreover, it was imperative that the buyers respond with the same professionalism. White later informed Askew that "[his home] is now done and I want to close the matter out at once. Let me hear from you without delay and oblige." (White, 1903).

White's company was faced with some problems. Due to the degree of difficulties that White's company had at the beginning, his investor group allowed him to lead them throughout this endeavor. For example, the George H. White Realty and Development Company was having a problem with finding skillful laborers, like brick masons and painters. In a letter to Askew, White wrote that, "I have been somewhat delayed in the completion of your house for the want of a brick mason and a painter." (White, 1903).

However, White did not allow these minor setbacks to deter his company from completing the job. The company tried to stay on course to meet its deadline and faced with a changing schedule. Moreover, the company was determining to keep its buyers informed on the progress of their property.
This type of problem caused White to extend stocks to two other people, because the company had some problems with obtaining necessary material and laborers.

White's company offered company shares to two African-American Washingtonians, John F. Cook, Jr., and his brother George F. T. Cook. According to George W. Reid, White formed this relationship because the Cook brothers were producers of mason bricks, and provided the opportunity for new capital. Reid wrote that, " White was hard pressed for

a relatively small amount of money." [43] In addition, the Cook brothers were an answer to the company's lack of building supplies, like mason brick. As Reid stated, "it seems the Cooks were suppliers of various types of bricks." [44]

The George Henry White Land & Improvement Company, was part of the growing "Black Nationalism Movement" early part of the 20th century. This "self-reliance" movement connected the African-American community. According to Clement Alexander Price, African-American community in New Jersey during this period was "formed not because of white racial hostilities, but also because their inhabitants desired to live apart from whites and maintain their customers, family ties, land holding, and in some cases, isolation." [45]

Another important element the George Henry White Land & Improvement Company was able to accomplish was the concept of "group integrity". White's company contributed to this concept by providing a peaceful environment for African-American lives

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[43] George W. Reid, "A Biography of George H. White, 1852-1918", (Ph.D. diss.,Howard University, 1974), 183.
[44] George W. Reid, "A Biography of George H. White, 1852-1918", (Ph.D. diss.,Howard University, 1974), 183.
[45] Clement Alexander Price, Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro-Americans in New Jersery, (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1980) 134.

and work. Price noted that the African-American communities of New Jersey "created conditions favorable to the attainment of group integrity." [46] White empowered the people of Whitesboro to create their own political, social, economic conditions.

Furthermore, Price states that, "local residents started small businesses and churches." [47] In the case of Whitesboro, they used same methodology. White sought to create an education system, therefore providing a long-lasting effect on African-American lives. This opportunity also created a hope for African-American teachers in Whitesboro. The George Henry White Land & Improvement Company, provided the people of Whitesboro with "social and mutual aid organizations." Therefore, Price noted that, "advocates for race solidarity and uplift emerged, too, form the ranks of black entrepreneurs, educators, and journalists in New Jersey." [48]

White's company had a deeper purpose hidden within its mission. In some of the early promotion items, the company was originally called the George H. White Land and Improvement Company; a few years later, the company changed its name to the

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[46] Clement Alexander Price, Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro-Americans in New Jersery, (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1980) 135.
[47] Clement Alexander Price, Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro-Americans in New Jersery, (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1980) 135.
[48] Clement Alexander Price, Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro-Americans in New Jersery, (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1980)

George Henry White Land & Improvement Company. A name like the former implied that White was interested building people. He recognized that, if the human potential of African-Americans was not developed, they faced the social hardships.

White understood that there was not a prize for those who deprived themselves the opportunity of developing within. White stated that "the soul of those [African-Americans] living in the southern states were wretched and deprived and underdeveloped and rotten from within." (White 1901). Therefore, this opened the door for African-American elite from Washington, D. C. to invest in George H. White vision to develop a place where African-Americans could obtain the American dream.

The African-American elites of Washington D.C. and North Carolina were the essential backers for White's company. They were the part of a predominant movement after Reconstruction. According to Willard B. Gatewood, "the black elite was predominate in the forty years following the end of Reconstruction." [49] White was part of this small community of African-Americans living in the US. Gatewood tells of, "the existence of a black elite, small in number and light in complexion, whose culture and style of living more closely

[49] Willard Gatewood, Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 7.

resembled that of the better class of whites than that of masses of their darker brethren." [50]

The investor group that helped White was part of larger group who sought to improve the lives of African-American living in the South. These African-Americans were those who "exhibited a self-conscious elitism." (Gatewood, 1990). For example, Gatewood stated that "on some occasions it led to condescension and even arrogance toward other blacks, especially the poor, uneducated masses at the bottom of the class structure." (Gatewood, 1990).

Moreover, they were "sometimes referred to as a "vicious" and "degraded"". [51] The people that White selected were part of this group, but they seems to have purpose that was greater than the individual. Gatewood wrote that, "this same elitism produced a sense of awesome responsibility that translated itself into a commitment to improve the lot of the race in general." [52]

Paul Laurence Dunbar was part of White's investor group. Dunbar was a famous African-American poet at the turn of the 20th century. Gatewood states that, "Dunbar possessed sufficient

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[50] Willard Gatewood, Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 7.

[51] Willard Gatewood, Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 29.

[52] Willard Gatewood, Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 29.

literary stature to be what was called an ornament of Washington's colored society." [53] In addition, Gatewood tells us that Dunbar "described [Washington] as the place where the breeziness of the West met the refinement of the East, the warmth and grace of the South, and the culture and fine reserve of the North." [54] The enlistment of Paul Dunbar in the Cape May purchase provided White with a network to operation within.

Harriet Gibbs was part of White's investor group. She was the wife of Napoleon Marshall. Marshall was one the Washington elite: he was Harvard-educated and an employee of the city of Washington DC tax office. In addition, George F. T. Cook and John F. Cook, Jr. were probably the most influential members of White's investor group. They were graduates from Oberlin College. According to Gatewood, they "achieved great prominence in Washington's black community." [55] The investor group was comprised of the types of financial backers needed to make White's dream come true.

As member of the Washington DC African-American establishment, the net wealth of this group was substantial. John F. Cook was probably worth over $200,000 and George F. T. Cook was worth over $50,000 at the turn of the century. Beyond

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[53] Willard Gatewood, Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 64.
[54] Willard Gatewood, Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 60.

the economic success of White's investor group, they had genuine concerns for the uplift of African-Americans.

White's investor group was part of a social change that sought political, economic, and social equality with whites. Gatewood states that,

> Despite the hardening of racial practices and erosion of civil rights for blacks in the post-Reconstruction Washington, the colored aristocrats held steadfast to the hope that the Negroes would ultimately achieve equality. [56]

This was the belief of White and the primary mission of his company. White was focusing on finding a place where African-Americans could define the "American Dream"; White's company believed that African-American was socially equal to whites. Therefore, if African-Americans could be owners of their homes, they would be able to live in a "comfortable and fashionable" environment; moreover, this would be the key for White's company and the solution to the "race problem" in America.

White and his investor group understood that the primary real estate opportunities for African-Americans were in the West and the North. They believed that the African-American population in the South, especially in the state of North Carolina and Virginia were subjugated. According to the New York Times of 1903 newspaper, the "subjugation of the Negro has

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[55] Willard Gatewood, Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 40.

been carried to such a point that an educated colored man can no longer remain there." [57] White's position was that African-Americans should own the soil.

White and his investor group believed that African-Americans should live separate from the rest of the American population. White stated, "I have no patience with talk about colonizing the colored people in some separate state or territory." (White, 1903). White's words does not contradicts his actions, because he wanted a place where African-Americans could experiences a different community identity, separate from the Jim Crow identity that they were experiencing at the turn of the century. In addition, they believed that African-Americans had a right to settle on any free or purchased land. According to White, "what is good for the white man is good for the colored man." (White 1903).

White's investor group was determined to improve the lives African-Americans from the south. They were not seeking a profit-return on their investment; moreover, it was a return on social equality, political fairness, and economic justice for countless southern African-Americans. According to Philadelphia Tribune,

> Mr. White is of the opinion that colored men should seek to improve their conditions along all approved lines; that

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[56] Willard Gatewood, Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 45.
[57] New York Times (New York), 25 August 1903).

> they should study finance as well as farming; that they should not only strive to earn money by honest toil, but should study the value of the dollars so earned. [58]

By creating opportunity in home ownership, White's development company was an example of cooperated partnership by African-American political, community, and business leaders at the turn of century. The George Henry White Land & Improvement Company's investor group started a movement that was part of the developing of the modern African-American. In addition, the foresight of visionary leadership of White contributed to creating the 20th century African-American middle class.

White's real estate company was exclusively an African-American enterprise. For example, its primary purpose was to sell and rent homes to African-Americans migrating from the South. Moreover, as White envisioned, the Cape May area would be a place that African-Americans could call their own. Whitesboro became a place where African-Americans could live as they desire.

The company's financial worth is unknown. In addition, the financial agreement between White and his investors is unknown. However, the company's capitalization was strong enough for White to create a financial institution called the People's Savings Bank in Philadelphia. In 1907, this bank was the first

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[58] Philadelphia Tribune (Philadelphia), 02 November 1907.

African-American bank in the North. According to Shirley Green, it served as a lending institution for African-Americans to become home and business owners, especially in Whitesboro. As a reporter wrote in the New York Age of 1907 that People's Savings Bank was, "the only Afro American bank in the North that came into existence…it is called the People's Saving Bank." [59] The reporter wrote further that, "a crowd of people lined up awaiting the opening of the doors." [60]

In 1910, the African-American population of Cape May increased by 86%. At this time, the total population was 474 people. The working African-Americans made up to 42% of the working class. The are 17 homeowners and 96 renters. [61] These renters are the key to making White's plan happen.

The People's Savings Bank was similar to White's land development project in Whitesboro. White wanted to make sure that African-Americans had the opportunity to participate fully in American society. White stated that,

> We have had a good opening day; our deposits have been large. In addition, ordinary avenues of banking and business were closed to members of the Afro-American race because of racial dislike. I thought that it would be a good plan to start a bank, where the Afro-American could deposit his money, instead of spending it. I want to teach the members of my race economy. [62]

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[59] New York Age (New York), 12 November 1907.
[60] New York Age (New York), 12 November 1907.
[61] United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 11th, 12th, and 13th Census of the United States, 1910—Population.

White's economic development project, then mirrored his real estate project. They both would allow for African-Americans to fully interact in America regardless of the racist "Jim Crow" laws.

Section III

Whitesboro

Once the investors gave their money to White, he had to implement his vision on small scale. He relocated his cousin Henry and Hattie Spaulding. Henry Spaulding was appointed by White and the company, according to Vera C. Smith, as "superintendent to handle and develop Whitesboro." (Smith 1981). Once the news circulated about this new settlement of African-Americans, Smith stated that, "people began coming from all over, mostly from North and South Carolina." (White 1981). According to Smith, White's company established two major resources in 1903.

> First, they established a United States Post Office. Its postmaster was Henry Spaulding for 14 years. According to Smith, White arranged for the "Pennsylvania and Reading lines from Philadelphia to Cape May and Wildwood. (Smith 1981).

In 1906, White's company helped to establish the First Baptist Church of Whitesboro. White's company sold the land for only one dollar. In 1907, the Methodist Church established an

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[62] New York Age (New York), 12 November 1907.

African-American Methodist Church. According to Smith, "the sum of $90.00 was paid for land dated, December 16, 1907." (Smith 1981). A transaction between the White's company and the Middle Township Board of Education established a school in Whitesboro. According to Smith, "the Middle Township Board of Education brought land from the George Henry White Land & Improvement Company for $120.00." (Smith, 1981).

Furthermore, White's first choice was to buy property in New York. Moreover, White was looking for property in uptown New York City. The upper part of New York City was becoming a Mecca for African-Americans, who were trying to escape the shackles of and mental abuse of 'Jim Crow'. White would be the leader who would lead modern African-Americans across the Red Sea of racism, and lead them to the promised land of the North.

White's action would be the beginning of a progressive movement towards the fair treatments of the children of former slaves in the state of North Carolina. Moreover, Cape May would become the place that would change the social, political, and economic present of African-Americans. White and his investor group were part of new economic trend facing African-Americans at the turn of the 20th century. According to Gregory Mixon, African-American nation building between 1865 and 1899 was intended to be a part of a new nation coming together out of the national fragmentation that characterized the antebellum

period." (Mixon 1998). White's company was one of the apparatus of the 1900s to assist with African-American "nation building" for the children of former slaves.

White's decision to build in Cape May was due to the influx of African-Americans moving to places like Harlem, Chicago, and other northern cities. In 1908, Richard R. Wright, Jr., explained in his essay "*The Economic Condition of Negroes in the North: Negro Communities in New Jersey*" how African-Americans from North Carolina migrated to Whitesboro. They came to Whitesboro because it marked the beginning of a new life. According to George W. Reid, "Negroes had begun to immigrate from many places into Whitesboro in efforts to find jobs and a 'good place to live'". (Reid 1974).

White's company was not building houses at a steady pace, due to the local African-American economy in Cape May. In 1903, things changed, because the Atlantic Railroad built two lines connecting Whitesboro to Philadelphia and Wildwood. Reid stated that, "the Atlantic Railroad Company bought land from the George H. White Realty & Development Company, and they started railroad construction, therefore supplying many of the unemployed with jobs." This changed the social structure of those African-Americans living in Cape May. Most of all, White was changing the lives of those disfranchised African-Americans coming from North Carolina, Maryland, and Virginia

White talked to people about Whitesboro. White wrote letters to General Askew, in which White and the company addressed the progress of town. White indicated that, "I was down to our New Jersey property this week, and just returned yesterday. We have had a surveyor and choppers laying out streets and locating corners for sometime and shall continue that work form now on." (Mrs. Wiley J Williams' Personal Paper). Later, in the summer of 1902, the White and the company sent another letter to Askew. In this letter he explained that the company was working feverishly to get his home finished. Reid stated that, White wanted to get Askew into a home in Whitesboro as soon as possible."

White needed all the parties involved to understand that the George Henry White Land & Improvement Company was not rich. However, the company maintained its commitment toward seeing Whitesboro emerge as a peaceful community of African-Americans.

In November of 1902, White and his company wrote a third letter to Askew. This time White talked about the financial responsibility between Askew and the company. In this letter, White was explaining to Askew that the company had purchased some homes from a company in Seattle, Washington. Reid states that the letters to Askew demonstrated White's concentrated activity at selling what he believe to be a worthwhile business, to the public.

According to Reid, "White was a person of much activity, the progress that had been made between White and Freight firm in Seattle." (1974). In addition, Reid indicated that "this was the first clear sign that the settlement in Cape May, would bear the name Whitesboro." (1974). Lastly, the George Henry White Land & Improvement's Company "showed [a] desire to complete a job and do it well." (1974).

The social idea that African-Americans must be confined to certain area of a city or town was dismantled by the George Henry White Land & Improvement Company. For example White stated that, "the idea that it not practicable to put colored and white tenants together in the same house can be done away with" (1904).

White's real estate company was going to fight against the racial prejudice of Cape May. White and his investor group turned race prejudice into dollars and cents. The very prejudice he and other African-Americans faced was turned and re-directed toward making a social, economic, and political profit. White's real estate project presented to the newly arriving African-Americans to Cape May, conditions very different from those in the South.

White's Promotions and Slogans

One particular way that the company attracted new residents was with its stylish advertisements. Their messages promoted

the development as a place "where seashore and bountiful soil". (1901). Moreover, the company "assured a delightful home" for African-Americans coming to the area. White wanted African-Americans to know that "now is the time to buy". (1901). Furthermore, White wanted to assure new settlers that Whitesboro was their home. The company stated to African-American buyers that "your future security and happiness is assured by personal ownership of land".

The company wanted its buyers to understand the location, climate, soil, transportation, education, recreation, employment, responsibility, investment, churches, and growth. The land was divided into four separate parts that would function as one town. There were two features that broad the new town. One was the railroad and the Northern Wildwood. The White was connecting to one of the oldest and most famous seashore resort on Route 9. The company promoted the location as stated below,

> Whitesboro, Wildwood Heights and Wildwood Junction Heights: practically speaking are one town, being separated by the old Pennsylvania Railroad and the new Wildwood Boulevard and only ten minutes to either Wildwood or Cape May, NJ. (George Henry White Land & Improvement Company, 1901 to 1918)

The climate in this part of the U.S. was very favorable. It was not as humid as the South. White believed that it was an ideal place. The company stated that here "bracing sea breezes

are combined with those the famous Pine Belt." In addition, the company wanted to dismiss any fear that the area was subject to harsh winters. White stated that "our winters are mild, pleasant and short." This would bring comforts to those African-Americans migrating from Maryland, North Carolina, and Virginia. The company stated that "in the summer we are near enough to the Atlantic Ocean and Delaware Bay to have the hottest day comfortable."

The soil was also helpful in marketing this new town. The people coming to the area were experienced in agriculture. They were former slaves who toiled the soils of their masters for over 200 years. Therefore, White noticed that the soil was "a light, loam soil, easy to cultivate and adaptable to the growing of all kinds of garden products, fruits, berries, garden truck, and melons." (White 1903). He explained further that the "ground is high and dry, highly suitable for raising poultry and hogs."

A practical transportation system was a goal for the George Henry White Land & Improvement Company. The company wanted to provide "speedy buses" for its residents. White was able to secure the Pennsylvania Reading Railroad services. Another benefit was the state highway passing through the town. This made it even more attractive, because it had some modern infrastructure.

White demonstrated that transportation to the town was being provided by the "Pennsylvania Reading Train Service." For example, he stated that "states adjoining property, and by the automobile over the state highway from Philadelphia to Cape May" made it possible for people to travel to and from Cape May. According to White, the highway "passes through the property." (George Henry White Land & Improvement Company, 1901 t0 1918).

White's company plan was to attract families to the area. He needed to convince potential buyers that Whitesboro was able to provide proper schooling for their children. The company notices stated that "Whitesboro has an excellent elementary public school." The company went on to promote the fact that the "children [were] being instructed by colored teachers." The company ads also stated the older children are being "transported…to the high school at [the] Cape May Court House." (1907).

The development promised a strong job market for the newcomers. The employment opportunities for African-Americans coming to the area were diverse. A person coming to the area could work for local "lumber mill, roadway, and building material plant, railroad and roadway [developments]." Moreover, a person could work for one of the local "hotels [or] private homes at the seashore resort." (George Henry White Land & Improvement Company 1901 to 1918).

One of White's tenets for his company was responsibility. White's company had a reputation for respecting and dealing with people fairly. He stated that "our company enjoys a reputation for honesty and square dealing." Moreover, White wanted people buying into his development to know they would be working with a person who had been doing business for four decades.

In a promotion item, White told his buyers that "we own our ground free and clear of all indebtedness, making your investment an absolutely safe one." In addition, White wanted his buyer to know that African-Americans were buying into their future. He urged "invest in something you can see and use." The African-Americans moving into White's development were preparing for their independence. White, told them to "prepare for your future independence by buying a home-site now."

There were areas in which White's company wanted to reassure its potential customers. First, the church played an important role in the lives of many African-Americans moving from the South. The company stated that "here you will find four well organized churches; the Baptist, Methodist, Holiness, and Seventh Day Adventist." The churches would be a place where African-Americans could "worship and assure that their children would receive a very excellent spiritual training.

Section IV

Post George Henry White

The creation of Whitesboro was a very challenging endeavor for its visionary founder, George H. White. White did live to see his vision grow, on December 18, 1918 he died. He had envisioned decades before his death, a place were African-Americans could seek social, economic, and political freedom. Whitesboro would be a place where hope and desires were fulfilled. The Whitesboro Historian Foundation tried the capture their humble beginning in a book. One modern Whitesboro local historian was Leon Matthews. According to Dollie Price and Shirley Green, "Leon Matthews, known to everyone as "Junie," is a lifetime resident of Whitesboro, NJ." (WHF 1998). Matthews was the defacto mayor of Whitesboro. Green and Price stated that "we would like to call "Junie" the "Mayor of Whitesboro.

During the years after George Henry White, as Whitesboro was evolving, there were two primary organizations in Whitesboro. There were the Oddfellows and Household of Ruth. According to WHF, "these organizations met in the building located at 123 George Street." (WHF 1998). This served as social and meeting hall for its local residents. WHF stated that, "at that time this was a two story building…dances were given downstairs and the meetings were held upstairs." WHF 1998).

The Oddfellows were a group of males. They included John Lee, Fred Henderson, and Tom Henderson. The Household of Ruth a female organization. According to the WHF, "some of members of the Household of Ruth were Rosa Spaulding, Lucy Palmer, Timy Spaulding, Nancy S. Goff, Annie Mapp, Bessie Johnson, Bessie Williams, Eliza Henderson, Caroline Hunter, and Ruth H. White." (1998). These two organizations were responsible for running Whitesboro's local cemetery. The WHF stated that, "the Oddfellows named the burial ground the Oddfellows Cemetery." (1998). Once the Oddfellows dissolved the Household of Ruth took over the management of the cemetery. Otherwise, according to the WHF, "Whitesboro had their own private cemeteries on their own grounds." (1998).

The post-George H White era of 20s witnessed Whitesboro first volunteer fire department. It was located on George and Main Street. According to Green, "they had 250 gallon barrels hooked up to a wagon." (1998). The Whitesboro fire department had a very simple system to fight fires. The WHF stated that, "when they had a fire in Whitesboro, the person who arrived at the wagon first hooked the wagon up to their car and took it where the fire was." (1998). In addition, "the bell that was used to notify people was in front of St. Stephen's AME Church." (1998).

According to WHF, "the first grocery store was Lattimore's Store which was a grocery store and a barber shop, which later burned down." (1998). Later, "the next grocery store was owned by James Matthews." (1998). It was located on route 9 and Matthews Street. In 1925, Johnny Faison owned a grocery store. According to the WHF, "George Mayo also had a grocery store on Rt. 9 located next to Mary Graham's house." (1998). In 1929, a woman named Mary Smith operated her own grocery store.

During the mid 40s, Green stated that, "William Latta operated a grocery store located 210 W. Main street, which later burned down." (1998). But, according to Green, "Latta relocated and had another grocery store a few feet away on Main Street." (1998). Later in the 40s, Nathan Jones became a grocery storeowner. Lastly, the WHF stated that "William Reese operated a grocery store until his death." (1998).

On Cocharan Street and Route 9, there were cleaners. If a person needed his or her shoes repaired, he or she could go one of the two shoe repair businesses in Whitesboro. According to Green, "they were owned by Robert Boyd and Shelly Williamson. They were both located on route and one located opposite Gibson Street." (1998).

One of Whitesboro's primary businesses was the E. F. Endicott sawmill. According to Green,, "E.F. Endicott built a saw mill and hired almost all the men of Whitesboro. They made

fish boxes for profit and sawed lumber for shipbuilders." (1998). The mill lasted for 56 years. It turned off its saws in 1964, due to financial hardship. The WHF stated that, "it was said that Mr. Gaston Blanks of Whitesboro was Endicott's partner when the mill was established." (1998).

Another developing business in Whitesboro during the post-George H. White ere was trash collection. John Lee was the first African-American to own a trash route. Green stated that "between 1924-1932 John Lee had the first trash route, covering Wildwood Crest." (1998). Moreover, this opened the door for Fred Henderson and James Matthews to became owners of their own trash collection businesses.

The business enterprises of Whitesboro grew steadily. There were two more barbershops. They were own by Jesse Evens and Jesse Bryant. The major development was probably the transportation system. According to Green, "the Pennsylvania and Reading Lines from Philadelphia to Cape May and Wildwood, bought land in Whitesboro where the trains ran through until the late 1980s." (1998). Furthermore, the train served as the mail transport for African-Americans.

PHOTOS

ARE

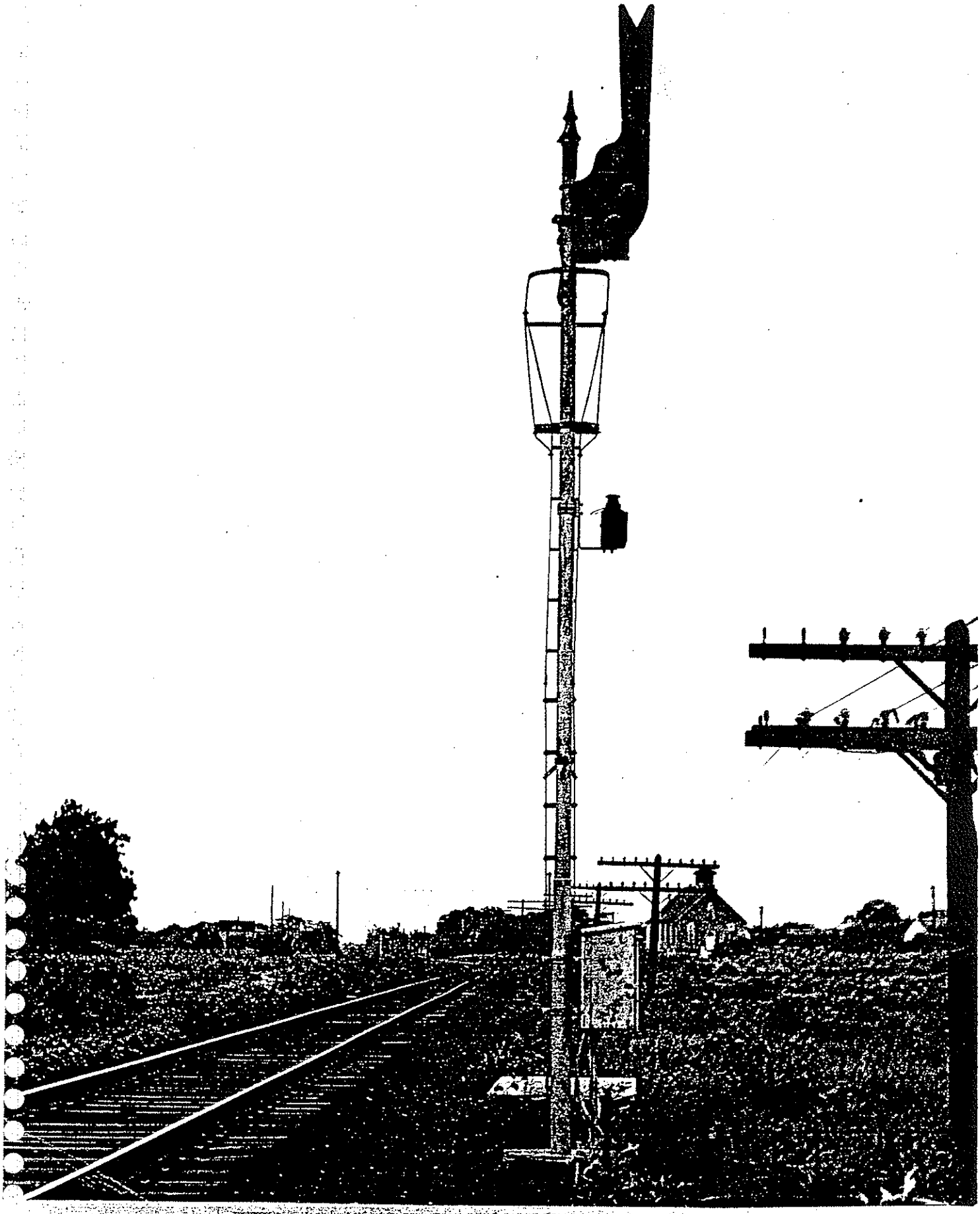
TAKEN

FROM

THE WHITESBORO HISTORIAN

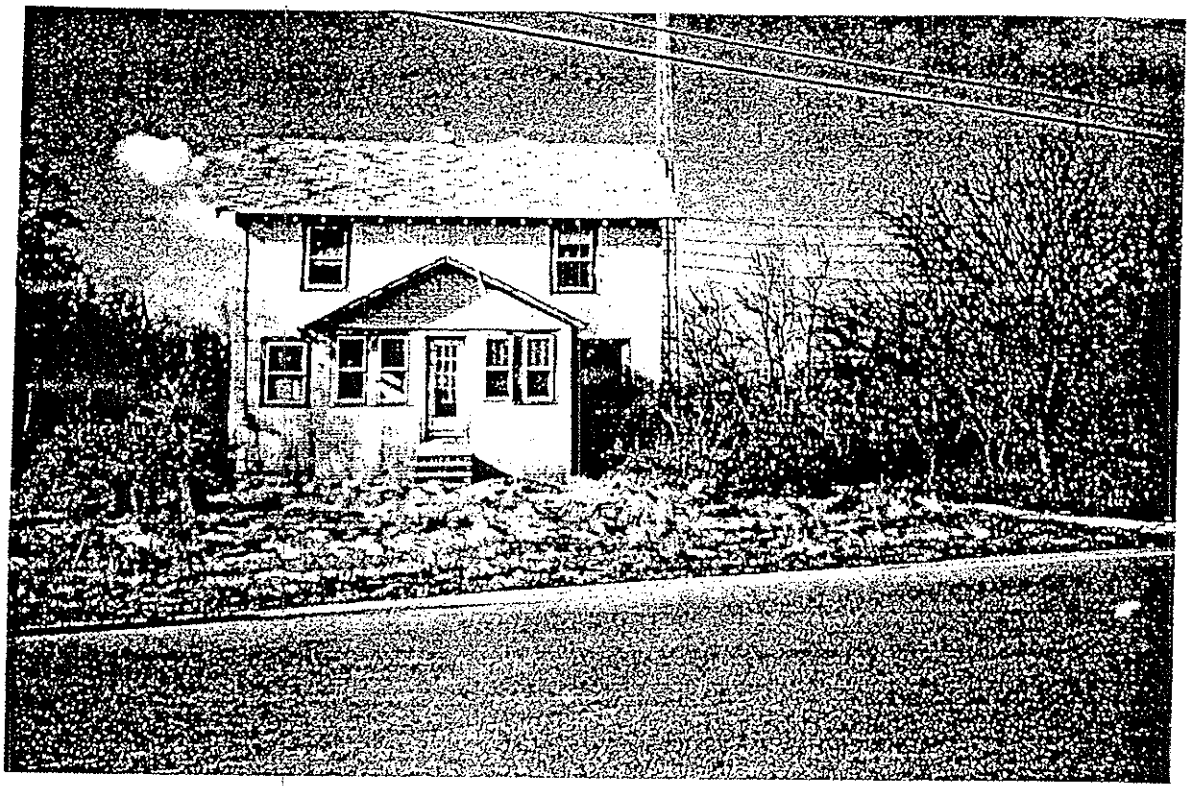
FOUNDATION COLLECTIONS

1998

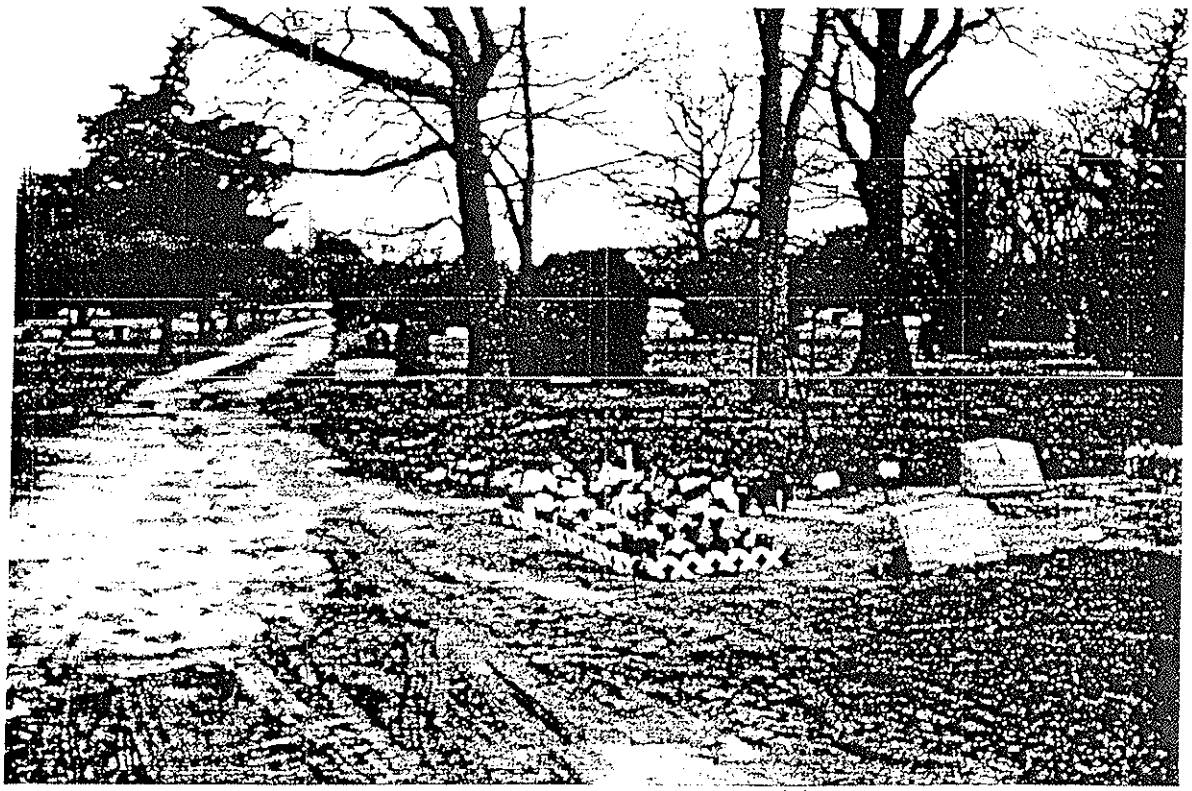


In 1903, the Pennsylvania and Reading Lines from Philadelphia to Cape May and Wildwood bought land in Whitesboro where the trains ran through until the late 1980s.

E.F. Endicott Saw Mill

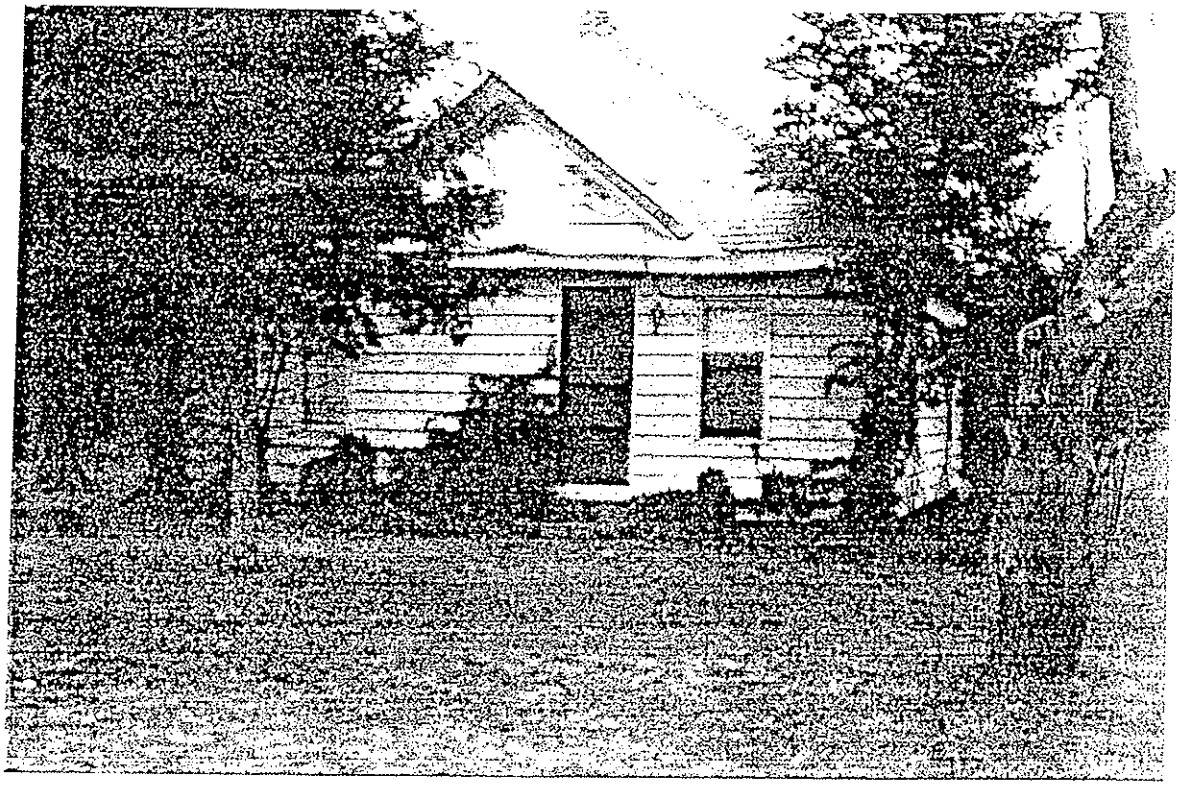


John Lee's House
Pennsylvania Avenue
(next to cemetery)



HOUSEHOLD OF RUTH (CEMETERY)

PENNSYLVANIA AVE



WILLIAM KEY 108 DUNBAR ST.

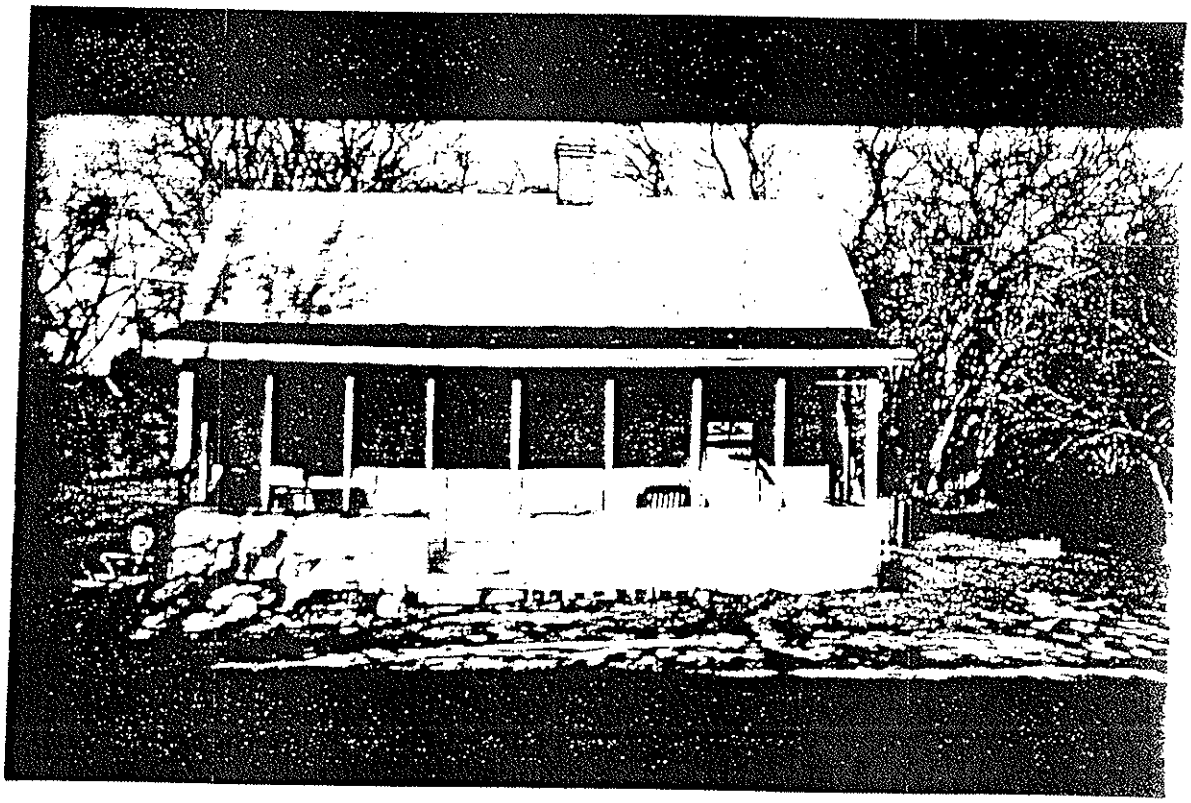
STEVE DIAMOND'S HOUSE
20[illegible] SEA ROAD

MARY BURKE'S HOUSE
2013 "B" SHORE ROAD

DORIS ARMSTRONG'S HOUSE
1804 ROUTE 9 SOUTH

BOISIE CLAY'S HOUSE
405 GIBBS STREET

OLA ANN HALL
220 W. MAIN STREET



MR. THOMAS FAISON'S HOUSE
DUNBAR STREET